By HUGH CONWAY.

Author of "Called Back," "Dark Days,"

"A Family Affair," Etc.

CHAPTER VIL

FACE TO FACE. The journey to St. Seurin occupied more time than I anticipated. I reached Paris the next morning, and, without halting for rest, took the first train to Rennes. From Rennes I had to go to IrOrient, which I found was as far as the rail way could carry me toward my destination.

me toward my destination.

Rennes I reached in the evening. Here I was compelled to spind the night, there being no train to L'Orient until the next morning. The morning train was a painfully slow one; it was not until late in the afternoon of the accord day that. I washed afternoon of the second day that I reached the fortified port on the Bay of Biscay.

There I inquired as to the best way of getting to St. Seurin. I found the place was nearly twenty miles away. A diligence which passed it left L'Orient every other morning at 10 o'clock. I must wait and go

I chafed at the time which must elapse before I mot my enemy, and was on the point of ordering a carriage and horses to take me to St. Seurin at once. But reflection told me that the arrival of a traveler in such a way, at a village so small as I ascertained St. Senrin to be, must excite curiosity. People would gossip, and the man whom I longed to meet might hear of my arrival, and once more fly and leave no trace. So I curbed my impatience, staid the night at L'Orient, and started in the morning by the lumbering old diligence.

morning by the lumbering old diligence.

Why is it, that when one is burning to reach a certain place, the sole available mode of progression seems not only the slowest but in many cases actually is the slowest that can well be hit upon. Those twenty miles, or their equivalent in kilometres, seemed longer than all the rest of the journey. True, the road was in many places steep, and the heavy vehicle not adequately horsed; and very likely no one save myself was in a hurry.

But the most wear isome journey ends at last. A snail, if allowed time, will arrive at his goal. The diligence reached St. Seurin, and as I dismounted in front of a miserable-looking little inn I could scarcely respective.

rin, and as I dismounted in front of a miserable-looking little inn I coald scarcely repress a cry of exultation. Eustace Grant was all but within my grasp.

I entered the inn, where I was received with joyful faces. Guests were, no doubt, few, and their visits far between. I asked if I could have accommodation, and was assured I could count upon the hest out of sured I could count upon the best out of Paris. At another time this grandiloquent assertion would have amused me. Now nothing amused me, and I cared for nothing so long as I could have food and drink and a place to lay my head until I had ac-complished my mission.

I dined, for I was beginning to feel the effects of the exhausting journey. Then I walked out and took stock of my surround-

ings.
St. Seurin was, as I had been informed, a small decaying village. Scane of the house; were picturesque in their way, but many were half in ruins. There was a church, whose size was, of course, utterly disproportioned to the village. There were the shops necessary to supply the needs of the scanty population. So far as I could see, there was nothing else.

I struck my, beel on the dusty, sandy path.

Was it for a life in such a place as this that Viola had left me? Had she given up all the comforts and luxuries with which I would have surrounded her to hide with the partner of her flight in a wretched hole where she could see no one save rough fishermen, peasants, and such like? If so, her love for Grant must be more thon mortal to lying about such a sacrifica of all that woman, from the time of Eve down-ward, have been credited with longing after. These questions, and the only answer I could give to them, did not improve the state of my mind.

It was now growing dusk. I walked back to the little inn, went to my room, and asked for lights and coffee. A broad-faced, broad-shouldered Breton lass ministered to my wants. I entered into conversation with her, and in spite of her patois managed to understand her.

I asked about the place and the people. She shrugged her shoulders. Ah! but the place was decaying—going down—gone down. Once, she had heard that people could live there and make money; but that was hundreds of years ago. Now, every one was poor as poor could be. Parents could not give their daughters dots—girls could not save them. Besides, many of the young men went away. They went to L'Orient and became sailers. It was a rare thing for a girl to get married in St.

Seurin.

Were there no visitors—no English, for instance—staying in the neighborhood! No —yes. There was one monsieur—he was not the lived at Pierre Boulay's farm English. He lived at Pierre Boulay's farm—the farm just over the sea cliff yonder; the house nearest to the sea.

His name? Ah! she forgot those strange names. He was tall and handsome. He had been here, off and on, many months. He was a heretic, but kind to poor peopla. What did be do with himself in this desolate place? Ah! she knew not, True, young Jean, old Pierre's son, said that the gentle-man shut himself up for hours and hours, writing, and the cure, who knew him, said he was a learned man.

It was he! My journey had not been in vain. I longed to ask the girl if a lady lived with him, but I forced the question back. When I had finished with Eustace

Grant I could then think of Viola.

Where was he to be found! Was he at the farm now? She thought not. She had not seen him for some days. Most days he came down the hill and walked along the coast-far, far along the coast. If monsieur wished to meet with him he would surely

find him there. Yes, the coast was very fine. Sometimes artists came to paint it. Perhaps monsieur

She glanced at me. No doubt my coming had created curiosity. The question suggested an excuse for my staying at such a place as St. Seurin.

Yes; she had guessed right. I was an artist. I had come to draw pictures of the coast. She seemed pleased at having guessed the nature of my occupation, and quickly left me, no doubt to make her discovery known to all who were interested in the matter. I needed her no longer. I had

learned enough.

Fate seemed shaping everything to my hand. I had learned that Grant was almost within stone's throw; that nearly every day he took a solitary walk along the coast. It was on the coast, far away from fear of interruption, that I would arrange for our meeting to take place. All I now wished to guard against was a premature

discovery of my presence.

The next morning I stepped out and surveyed the scene of action. Far, far of the glorious sea to the tall, rugged liffs, in a break of which the tiny village

I climbed the hill, and from the top, look-ing across the valley, could see the small farmhouse in which the object of my batred

lived. I dared not go near to it. I turned and regained the sea coast, and walkel along under the cliff, picturing with savage rapture the moment when, utterly unsuspecting of our contiguity, Eustace Grant would find himself confronted by me, and called upon to reckon up the cost of his foul treachery. .

But that day, and other days, passed with-out my seeing a sign of him. I spent nearly all the hours of daylight on the coast. Again and again I went through the scene which I had pictured. I stood a few paces from him on a stretch of sand. I re-proached him and exulted in the vengeance which I was about to take. I could see my-self raise my right hand and fire. I could see the man fall lifeless. Over and over again during those weary hours of waiting

again during those weary nours of waiting I acted my part in this drama.

I gloried in the thought that he was now famous; that life hold great prizes which his hands could grasp. He had cut short my dream of joy. I could do even more to him. I could kill him when the ball of success and ambition was at his feet. In the first flush of his triumph he would find me waiting for him. Oh, it was well I had been tardy in my acts! I could now take

far more than life from my fee!
So day after day I sat or lay on the coast, full of such thoughts as these. Except when looking for my foe, I spent all my time in my own room. Day after day went by, but we met not. I supposed him to be away from home. No matter. I could wait a month, a year, ten years. Had I not sweet thoughts wherewith to while away the time? I made no more inquiries about him. I was afraid he might hear of them, and guess who wanted him. I waited

calmly and patiently.

One morning I staid later than usual in my room. As I glanced through my window, which looked upon the broadest part of the dusty road running through the village I saw that St. Seurin was in such festival guise as it could assume. Men, women and children were standing about, dressed in holiday clothes. Then I remem-bered that the girl who waited upon me had bered that the girl who waited upon me had said something about to-day being a great festival of the church. I had given little heed to her words. I watched the crowd for a few minutes, and presently saw a sight which, had my mood been happier, would have delighted me. Girls and boys came, bearing tall wicker baskets full of leaves, pulled from various flowers and green shrubs. The sandy space in front of me was cleared. A young man ran nimbly from point to point, tracing as he went lines in the dust. Then, solzing the baskets one after another, he distributed their glowing contents in such a way that in less ing contents in such a way that in less than twenty minutes what looked like a carpet of a variegated pattern, formed of flowers, covered the dusty space.

As he hastily threw the last spinsh of crimson rose leaves into its place the procrimson rose leaves into its place the pro-cession of priests, acolytes and choristers appeared. It paused on the fair carpet, and some ceremony, such as a blessing, was gono through. Every hat was doffed, every knee was bent—all save one. There, on the out-skirts of the crowd, with head uncovered, in deference to others, but standing erect, I

aw the tall form of Eustace Grants
He had returned! A thrill of delight ran
through me as I gazed on the hated features
of the man who had robbed me of all I cared for. I drew back into the room, and watched him through my window. My time had

The procession resumed its march. The people followed it—most likely to the church. The space was all but descried. The various hues of the flower carpet were now blended together without order or pattern. Grant replaced his hat, crossed the road, and struck down a path which could only lead to the sea. I laughed as I saw him disappear.

with grim deliberation I threw open the barrels of my pistols and loaded them afresh. No lack of precaution on my part should aid the escape of my enemy. Then I sat down and waited. I wanted him to have a fair start, so that our meeting might take place as far up that deserted coast as

When I thought I had given him sufficient grace, I sallied forth in pursuit. I turned down to the sea as he had turned. I rounded the foot of the hill which sheltered St. Seurin from the nor' west winds, and then stood with the unbroken cliff on my right hand and the sand stretching away in front of me for miles and miles. In the distance I could see him-a white spot on the yellow sand. The heat was great, so he had clothed himself in dazzling white garments. He was, perhaps, half a mile in front of me, walking near to the edge of the sea. I quickened my steps, and rapidly diminished the distance between us.

I did not want to get so near that, if he turned, he might recognize me. I did not mean to overtake him. I meant to follow then, as soon as he liked, he might discover me. My only fear was that some path up the cliff might, unknown to me, exist—a path which he might take, and so go bome across the table land.

Grant walked leisurely; so I was soon within 300 yards of bim. I noticed that his head was bent forward, as is natural to those who think as they walk. His hands were behind him, and he paced with a slow but lengthy stride.

guessed who was upon his traces!

Suddenly be turned aside, and struck up the bach toward the cliff. I stood still and watched him. I saw him reach the top of the beach; then, as it were, disappear into the face of the cliff. I doubled my pace and hurried on, laughing in vengeful glee. I had him now! For by this time I knew every foot of that coast line. I knew that at the spot where Grant had vanished some convulsion of nature had torn the rocks apart; that, entering through what looked like a narrow fissur: you came upon a straight, smooth spac:, bounded by un-scalable crags, and carpeted by soft white sand. Not a cave, because it was open to the beavens, but all the same a natural cul

I had found this place. I had explored it. I had even longed that Eustace Grant might be in there, while I stood at the entrance, and held him like a rat in a trap. And now the thing I longed for had come to pass Perhaps to escape from the heat of the sun my enemy had chosen the one place in which I wished to meet him. I was right in saying that fate was shaping everything to my hand. Here I should face him, force him to fight, and slay him! I had him now, Strange to say, no thought of an issue

adverse to myself entered my head. So confident, so certain I felt, that I paused for a while at the entrance to the trap and steeled my heart by recalling all the wrongs which I had sufferel. I stood there until the sun made the barrel of the pistol, which I had drawn from my breast, as hot as fire. Then I crept between the two rocks, and went to recken up with Eustace Grant!

The change from the brilliant sunshine to the cool gloom of the grot, or whatever it should be called, was so sudden that for a moment I could not distinguish objects. When my eyes grew accustomed to the shade, I saw that Grant was lying on a heap of sand at the furthest end of the ravine way as eye could see was the stretch of mooth yellow sand running from the edge he seemed fast asleep. I crept toward him. My feet made no sound as they trod on the soft dry sand. I stood over him and looke! down on his powerful sace, strong, sun-burned neck, and large, muscular limbs He looke! the type of manhood. Ah! no



He looked the type of manhood. wonder he could win a woman's love if he

strove for it. A notebook lay near his left hand. Most Ikely he had been jotting down something which struck his fancy, when the grateful shade and the murmur of the distant sea had lulled him to sleep—a sleep from which he would a wake only to sleep again forever Nay, I might have placed the muzzle of the pistol next his heart, and bave sent him, without awakening, from one sleep to the other. But I had no intention of murder-ing the man in cold blood; nor would it have suite I me for him to die without knowing to whom his death was due. Besides, I meant it to be a fair duel—a duel to the death—between us. So I stooped, and laid one of my pistols near his right hand; then I walked back toward the mouth of the grot, leaned against a rock, and waited for him to awake.

Not for one moment do I attempt to dis-guise the devilish, vengeful feelings which could urge me in this calm manner to plan and compass this man's death. Now that years have passed since that day, I do not even ask you to bear in mind the wrong that had been done me. I simply relate what I did, and shall not murmur at the blame which I know will be meted out to me.

The man slept soundly. I waited; but no thought of foregoing my purpose entered into my brain. I waited until the dread that we might be disturbed struck me. I had gloated over my promise I victim long enough. Now let me act the crowning act. I detached a loose morsel of rock and tossed it toward the sleeping man. It fell on his outstretched hand. He started, rose to a sitting posture, rubbed his eyes; then to a string posture, rubbed in seyes; then, looking round, saw me, and knew why I was there. He saw the look of triumph and fell purpose on my face; he saw the pistol in my right hand; he sprang to his feet and took a step toward me.

I raised my hand and covered him with the intel. He must have looked almost down

pistol. He must have looked almost down the muzzle. "Stand still," I said, "or I

The bravest man may well hesitate ere he rushes on cartain death. Eustace Grant stopped short. My voice, my look, must have told him that my threat was no idle The steadiness of my hand told him that I should not miss my mark

"You have come to murder me!" he said, in a deep voice. "No; to kill you, not murder you Look

on the ground behind you; take the pistol which lies there; then we are equal. Take it, I say, and face me like a man. Fire when and how you choose; I can wait my

He turned and saw the pistol, but did not possess himself of it. He faced me steadily, although my weapon was still almed at his broad breust. Deadly as my hate was, I

was fain to admire his courage.
"I think you are mad," he said; "but listen I have something to say."
I stamp d my foot. "Coward! villain! take that pistol, or I swear I will shoot you see you stand!" as you stand!"

He stooped and picked up the weapon. A wave of fierce delight ran through me. The moment of reckoning was at hand.

Yet he balked me. He held up his hand and fired both barrels in the air. I uttered

"You are a man of honor, I suppose?" he said. "You cannot slay a defeaseless man."

Ithrust my left hand into my pocket and threw a handful of cartridges toward him.

threw a handful of care.

He should not e-cape me.

He hurled the pistol from him far over the top of the rock. My hope of killing him far fight was gone. I gritted my teeth, and swore that nevertheless he should

not escape. "Coward?" I shouted, with my finger trembling on the trigger.

He was bold, for he still stood erect and faced me. His face grew pale. No wonder, for death was close at hand. He spoke; his voice was clear and distinct.

"Listen," he said, "one moment before you stain your soul with this crime. Viola, your wife--" He said no more. The sound of her name

roused in me a burst of mad fury; all my enforced calm left me. "Silence, you hound!" I shouted. Grant must have seen the change in my

frant must have seen the change in my face, and guessed what it presaged. Doubtless life was dear, very dear to him. He sprang toward me. My finger pressed the trigger, and the report rang out. My hand as I fired was steady as a rock, and before I saw the effect of my bullet I knew that it had done its work.

The smoke cleared off. Grant was stag-gering to and fro. His hand was pressed to his right breast, and the red blood was creeping through his closed fingers and dyeing his pure white coat. Suddenly he fell, and lay like a log at my feet. The thing which I had for nights and days sighed for

had come to pass.

But not with the effect I had pictured. Instead of the exulation which I had promised myself, a title of utter horror swept through mc. One, only one, thought filled my brain—I had taken this man's life, and

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